(b) if so, how many of them have been accepted; and

(c) the reasons for not accepting the recommendation, which have been rejected?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) The recommendations/suggestions received from the Central Board of Trustees, Employees' Provident Fund and other sources related *inter-alia* to removal of discrimination between married sons and married daughters and between remarrying widows and remarrying widowers, extension of the scheme benefits to the employees drawing wages beyond Rs. 5000/- per month, provision for commutation, reduction in discounting rate for early payment of pension, provision of ensuring pension payment in default cases, application of the scheme to the serving subscribers who did not join the family Pension Scheme, 1971, refund of family pension related withdrawal benefit in the case of exemption and coverage of piecerated workers. These suggestions were examined and a notification carrrying out necessary amendments in the Employees' pension Scheme, 1995 was issued on 28.2.1996. Based on the recommendations of the Central Board of Trustees, Employees Provident Fund the scheme has been further amended providing, *inter-alia,* for payment of pension to the dependant parents, life-long pension to the disabled children, enhancement of minimum children pension from Rs. 115/- to Rs. 150/- per months, minimum orphan pension from Rs. 170/- to Rs. 250/- per month and minimum window pension to Rs. 450/per month in respect of the beneficiaries of the ceased Family Pension Scheme, 1971. Consequent to the second annual valuation of the Pension Fund as on 31.3.1998, an increase of 5.5% on pension in payment has been sanctioned, to the pensioners w.e.f. 1.4.1998. However, the recommendation of the Central Board of Trustees for enhancement of interest on the pension fund kept in public account from 8.5% to 12% per annum has not been found acceptable by the Government due to financial constraints.

Beneficiaries under New Pension Scheme

1591. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:
SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) how many persons entitled to get pension have superannuated after the enactment of new pension scheme, 1995 and superannuation pension of how many of them have so far been regularised;

(b) whether the rates of superannuation/family pension have at all been revised since the enactment of the scheme;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MUNI LALL): (a) Under the Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995, pension claims are settled on receipt of formal applications from the beneficiaries. As on 31.1.2000, superannuation/retirement pension has been sanctioned in 2,98,784 cases.

(b) to (d) Under the Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995, there is a provision for valuation of the pension fund and review of pensionary benefits on an annual basis. On completion of the first annual valuation, an increase of 4% on pension in payment was sanctioned to the pensioners *w.e.f.* 16.11.1996. Again on completion of the second annual valuation, additional relief of 5.5% has been sanctioned to the pensioners. *w.e.f.* 1.4.1998. The minimum amount of children pension has been enhanced from Rs. 115/to Rs. 150/per month, the minimum amount of orphan pension from Rs. 170/to Rs. 250/per month and the minimum widow pension under the ceased Family Pension Scheme raised to Rs. 450/per month.

Amendment in Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970

1592. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state whether Government are thinking to bring necessary amendment in the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 in view of decision on Air India case relating to appropriate Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI MUNI LALL): No, Sir.

Bonded Labour

1593. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.